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THE MINISTRY OF RELIGION

Religion is more than the strenuous life. To love our God and our neighbor with all our might does not exhaust the gospel. Beyond the imperative to love is the blessing of being loved by our God. Duty and illumination, reformation and reconstruction are no substitutes for that spiritual ministration which the strongest and most vigorous of us daily need.

We are not likely to be charged with raising inaction into a supreme religious mood, but is there not danger lest, in our militant idealism, our passion for social service, our search for efficiency, we lose that mellowness of life which comes to those who trust as well as serve?

We have not yet outgrown the need of those consolations of religion of which men used so frequently to speak. There is a peace of soul which passes our understanding even though we are psychologists. Fellowship with Christ will ease the yoke and lighten the burden of even the most unselfish social reformer.

Christ the consoler can never be lost in Christ the king.



Life brings to every man something more than calls to duty and opportunities for heroism. Sooner or later we each must face failure and disappointment, sorrow and suffering, deprivation and loneliness. Despite all men's attempts to conceive of death in terms of chemical reaction, stricken hearts still mourn their dead. Nor is the shout of battle enough for those who listen for voices forever still.



Our Christ knew the meaning of heroism in sacrificial service, but he knew also what it means to get peace and joy from fellowship with the Father. The message of his peace and the way to his

peace he left to his disciples. They were to share his joy as well as his cross.

Religion to be anything more than humanitarianism must give us companionship with the God of our spirits.

We need to pray as well as meditate; to ask God frankly and, if you will, naïvely for help and the things we need. For a god who cannot be prayed to and who cannot answer prayer is a very useless member of the fellowship of the cosmos.

Let us learn that we not only have to work for him, but that he can work for us; that we not only have to be brave, but that we can throw ourselves like the prodigal into our Father's arms; that for a Christian stoicism is as unworthy as epicureanism.



We need to be quiet more often, lest in the bustle of our religious life we overtrain our spiritual selves. We need to feel the ministration of the mountain and the prairie as well as hear the call of the slum and the hall of legislation. We need to feel that God can wipe tears from people's eyes as well as look after social evolution and progressive platforms.

We are not so superior to the men of the past as to have outgrown need of the comforting and the heartening of a God who is companion of our sorrows as well as master of fortunes and Lord of the kingdom for whose coming we pray and work.

Our most human moments are likely to be those in which we feel the touch of dependence and weakness. However liberal may be our theology in such moments we need to see that the Christ who nerves us to sacrificial service for others also must first enrich us with his own peace and trust.

For this, after all, is the gospel: God is with us to forgive and help us.

All else is duty and illumination.